

## Agreement Reached on State's Community Preservation Act

Senator Robert Hedlund announced today that the Conference Committee that has been working on a compromise version of the Community Preservation Act has reached an agreement. "This is great news for the towns and cities of Massachusetts," said Hedlund.

The Community Preservation Act will allow for greater open space conservation, historic preservation, and affordable housing. This bill is crucial to communities fighting urban sprawl, allowing cities and towns in the Commonwealth the opportunity to preserve the open space they feel is in need of protection.

The Conference Committee agreement eliminates the real estate transfer tax provision which Hedlund had opposed.

"This bill will be the single-most important tool communities will have to preserve their environmental and historic heritage in the new millennium,"

said Hedlund. "This is especially so on the South Shore where communities are nearing their full build-out potential and face intense development pressures."

Hedlund said he hoped that the bill would be acted on by the full House and Senate within days. "I hope this compromise will be passed quickly. It has been almost two years in negotiation. I know many of my constituents are very concerned about saving their communities from over-develop-

ment, and controlling their own environmental destinies."

Environmental and conservation groups have made this bill their top priority.

The legislation, which would have to be approved by local referendum, will allow communities to impose a surcharge between 1% and 3% on property tax bills to implement the program. A \$30 million annual appropriation would be available in the form of state matching funds to assist communities with specific projects.